

Safeguarding Policy

Springboard Opportunity Group welcomes children with any type of disability or additional need from birth to 5 years and their families living in North Somerset.

Statement of intent

At Springboard Opportunity Group we work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best possible start in life. In relation to children and young people, safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children' as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Aim of the policy

Our overall aim is to ensure children in our care are kept safe from harm through implementing this policy and promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by:

- Creating an environment that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- Encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Enabling children to have the self-confidence and the age appropriate vocabulary to keep themselves safe.
- Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- Working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

- Being alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

This Policy will be included in our file and highlighted to parents when they register their children. North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers is always displayed on our notice board.

Liaison with other bodies/safeguarding documents

- We work within the North Somerset Children's Safeguarding Partnership guidelines.
- 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015' is accessible to parents and staff.
- We have regard to the Government's statutory guidance '*Working together to Safeguard Children 2023*'
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
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- If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay (This means the North Somerset's Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team, , in emergencies, the Police)
- We follow North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers.
- We notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person, living working or looking after children on our premises. This is done within 14 days of these allegations.
- If a referral is to be made to North Somerset's Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team, we act under their guidance and within North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Staffing and volunteering

- Our designated practitioners take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children in each of our settings.
- Each designated practitioner is responsible for liaising with North Somerset's Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team and the Police.
- The designated practitioner will provide support, advice and guidance to any other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue within the setting as required.
- The designated practitioner will undertake the appropriate level of child protection training (as detailed in the North Somerset Child Protection Training Pathway) to equip them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect and take the lead in responding to safeguarding concerns. This will be kept up to date.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references, Criminal records checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service and other suitability checks for staff, volunteers, students and others (including those living or working on the premises) to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. This includes recording information about staff qualifications, checks and vetting processes and the carrying out of staff identity checks and asking about those adults a staff member lives with.
- We inform staff, volunteers, students and others of their requirement to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). A reminder of this requirement is within their regular 1:1 or Supervision cycle.

- If we become aware of relevant information which may lead to disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children.
- We will not employ or continue to employ a person who has a disqualification.
- We will meet our disqualification requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage, Statutory Framework, Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements.
- We do not allow people whose suitability has not been checked, including a criminal record check through the Disclosure Barring Service to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.
- Students on a paid placement will follow the same safer recruitment process we use for all staff.
- For students on a placement from a school or college that are over the age of 16, we will obtain checks that have been undertaken by the training provider prior to the student starting their placement. The training provider has a responsibility to share appropriately any information it holds on the student before the student begins any placement.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern and will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring team if the two main conditions of referral have been met.
- We will notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the premises where childcare is provided. The disqualification of an employee could be an instance of a significant event.
- We will give Ofsted the details relating to disqualification laid out in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements.
- Ofsted will be informed within 14 days of the date that as a provider we are aware of the information.

- All staff will be required to read this policy, the North Somerset Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers, and the Guidance to Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings during their induction. They will be asked to confirm they have read and demonstrate their understanding of the contents. They will be required to read and confirm understanding of the contents of the above documents annually.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting plus checking their identification and recording this.
- We take all reasonable security steps to ensure we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- All staff must demonstrate that they know how to make a complaint and understand policies on whistleblowing and allegations against other staff.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting's designated practitioner. The information is stored in the child's personal file. The practitioner will follow North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers
- Staff in the setting must take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- Absences are followed up and highlighted to Children's Social Care where there have been other concerns, or a family has Social Worker involvement.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children and learners from:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse or prejudice to the family
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- issues that may be specific to a local area or population
- domestic violence
- female genital mutilation
- fabricated or induced illness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- Children's health and safety and well-being
- the use of reasonable force
- meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- educational visits
- intimate care and emotional well-being
- Online safety and associated issues appropriate arrangements to ensure children's security, taking into account the local context.

Sexualised behaviour

- Whilst every family has its own set of names for parts of the body, at our setting we will use the terminology 'private parts' when referring to the areas covered by underwear and will be reinforced as part of keeping children safe at our setting.
- Any observations of sexual behaviour that isn't age-expected will be recorded and followed up in the same way as other suspicions of abuse.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteers within the setting, including an allegation of abuse.
- All staff and volunteers are made aware of the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- We follow the guidance of the North Somerset Children's Safeguarding Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken place, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the North Somerset LADO and Early Years Team Safeguarding lead and within 24 hours.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by the North Somerset LADO in conjunction with the police and Ofsted.
- If necessary, our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- We notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children on our premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). This will be done as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the very latest within 14 days of the allegation.

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days of the incident.

Training

- The designated practitioners will attend local authority recognised child protection training, this will include updates every three years and at least one of these practitioners will attend North Somerset Early Years Team's Designated Persons Safeguarding Clusters.
- In line with North Somerset's Child Protection Training Pathway for staff working in childcare settings, all staff are trained to understand and implement our safeguarding policy and procedures at least to Basic Awareness level.
- The training will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. This will also include inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images (Refer to North Somerset Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers)
- All staff have had the DfE document 'The Prevent duty departmental advice for schools and childcare providers' highlighted to them.
- All training will be kept up to date.
- All staff will have safeguarding updates, at least annually if not more frequently. These may be done by newsletter, staff meeting, in-service training or by being given an opportunity to read updated safeguarding documentation.

Early Years Foundation Stage/ Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our programme at a developmentally appropriate level for our children.
- We actively promote children's safety through our activities to enable children to feel safe.
- We aim to promote positive adult: child relationships and positive attachments through the key person system.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted so that they feel emotionally safe in our setting and grow to be strong, resilient, and listened to and develop an understanding of why and how to keep themselves safe.
- Children are provided with opportunities and experiences which foster a culture of mutual value and respect through having positive regard for each other's heritage arising from their colour, gender, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- Positive behaviour is promoted consistently. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the needs of individual children.
- Staff are experienced in managing risks and discussing these with the children involved.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child
- listens to the child
- if appropriate, gives reassurance that she or he will take action
- if necessary, to ask the child any questions the 'TED' (tell, explain, describe) model will be used

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- the child's name
- the child's address
- the age of the child
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- an objective record of the observation or disclosure
- the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
- the names of any other person present at the time
- action taken and by whom

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file.

Written records are made in a timely way and are held securely.

Making a referral to the local authority Referral and Assessment Team

- We follow North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers when contacting North Somerset Children's Social Care with any concerns.
- If a referral is to be made to North Somerset's Children Social Care Referral and Assessment Team, we act within North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the North Somerset Children's Safeguarding Partnership does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

- Sharing information is an intrinsic part of any practitioner's role.
- We follow the document 'Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' July 2018
- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- The setting believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the children's social care department.
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the social care department in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to any investigation.
- We may be asked to participate further in assessment of the child through an early help assessment, a child in need assessment or a child protection enquiry. We will actively contribute to this process which will be led by a Social Worker
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

Early Help and Early Help Assessment

Early Help means using the community of support around your family to make sure small problems don't become big problems. It's a way for families, children and young people of any age to get help as early as possible.

Early Help involves talking with a parent and/or family to understand what a child's needs are and find the people who can give the best help.

It is not a single service, tool or assessment, it is a safety net of services and organisations in the community who work together to get the right support at the right time from the right people.

<https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/children-young-people-families/early-help>

This will be where;

- Children have a multiple range of needs
- Children whose health, social development or educational attainment may be impaired without support
- Children are vulnerable and living with considerable adversity
- There is a clear need for co-ordinated multi-agency response.

It could be that the parent requests this or that a professional working with your child suggests that extra help may be useful. The earlier an Early Help Assessment is completed the sooner extra support can be explored. The assessment can only be carried out with parental agreement.

Prevent Duty

We at Springboard Opportunity Group see the prevent duty as an integral part of the safeguarding process and keeping children safe. We are alert to any reason for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. This includes awareness of the expression of extremist view.

Protecting children from radicalisation is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties. All safeguarding concerns will be documented including any that may be relating to radicalisation and our full Safeguarding process will be followed.

Where there are concerns over a child's pattern of attendance (which may or may not relate to radicalisation concerns) this will be documented and the parent will be informed and asked to sign the documentation.

We can build children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling children to challenge extremist views.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

We are aware of the mandatory reporting duty for girls who are believed to have received or be at risk of FGM. It is possible that this may be highlighted to us through nappy changing or intimate care procedures, behaviour of the child or family or highlighted verbally. We would never examine a child. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long lasting harmful consequences. If we believe this has taken place we follow the information provided in the document 'Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information'.

Procedure for checking the identity of visitors

- If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we check their credentials and reason for visit before allowing them to enter the setting
- We ask for at least 1 form of identification to verify who they are and, if appropriate, which organisation they work for (e.g. official identity badge, driving licence, bankcard which shows signature)

- If we require further verification, we will contact the main landline telephone number of their organisation and ask to be put through to the visitor's manager
- We ensure that the visitor is supervised whilst we are carrying out these checks, and throughout their visit
- We record that ID has been checked, together with the visitor's name, reason for visit, time and date in our visitor's book/log. The visitor is required to sign the book/log and their signature is then checked against their identification
- If the visitor or prospective parent is known to the setting, we check that they have a valid reason to enter. They are then required to complete the visitor's book/log and will not be left unsupervised in the setting.

Mobile phones and cameras

- We have a separate policy that covers the use of mobile phones and cameras in our setting

The legal framework for this Policy

Primary legislation

Data Protection Act 2018

The Children Act 1989 - s 47

The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)

North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers 2017

Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers (2018)

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. H M Government 2015

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (October 2019)

Secondary Legislation

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1999)

Equality Act 2010

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Contact Details for Registering Concerns

Professional Guidance and referrals:

North Somerset Children's Services, Single Point of Access

(SPA): **01275 888 801**

North Somerset Out of Hours Service; **01454 615165**

**Consultation and Advice Line: 01275
888 690**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **01275 888211** or **07795 092692**

Based in The Town Hall Weston

General guidance only:

North Somerset Early Years Team: Lead Early Years Advisor – **07920**

082811 Email: Gail.alder@n-somerset.gov.uk

Elizabeth.owen@n-somerset.gov.uk Local police, non emergency number **101**

OFSTED address for Complaints:

Ofsted
National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This policy was adopted by Springboard Opportunity Group's Board of Trustees at a meeting held on:

Date of meeting	
Signed by	
Name	Jenie Eastman
Role	Chair of Trustees
Date policy to be reviewed.	Spring 2024